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Garden Notes No. 20

Recent Experiences of an Iris Enthusiast Abroad.



VACATIONS are always enjoyable, but when one can combine business and pleasure, the enjoyment is more than doubled. And that is just what I did on my last vacation. Of course, I enjoyed my trip through North Africa and up the Nile, studying the monuments of antiquity, but my visits with the French and English growers stand out prominently in my delightful experiences.

In late March I visited Vilmorins and Cayeux. Vilmorins gave me a cordial welcome, but they frankly informed me that they would place none of their new seedlings on the market until they had accumulated a large stock. I was very anxious to obtain at least one root of their fall blooming Iris, Allies, but I did not succeed in getting it. Mr. Cayeux has established a very beautiful exhibition garden, which I hope to see in full bloom on one of my future vacation trips. He told me that he thought Renee Cayeux, Madame Henri Cayeux and Dryade were among the best things he had ever produced. He is looking forward to producing improved varieties by using Bruno, one of the new Dominion seedlings, in his propagating work. We will all be glad to see the results of his crosses.

I had several splendid visits with Mr. Millet. He has become the sole distributor of all the new Denis seedlings, and is most enthusiastic about Louis Bel, the Iris whose very dark color attracted me when I visited Denis' garden in 1922. In discussing his own productions he said that Germaine Perthuis, named in honor of his wife, was superior to Souv. de Madame Gaudichau, and that Simonne Vaissaire, Souv. de Loetitia Michaud, and Mlle. Cecille Bousecant were all deserving of popularity. Both he and Mr. Cayeux were high in their praises of the Denis' Irises, Gaspard de Besse, M. Masse and Madame Durrand.

The English enthusiasts were most cordial in their welcome. Both Mr. Murrell, of The Orpington Nurseries, and Mr. Wallace, of The Old Gardens, are looking forward to the first bloom on many Dominion seedlings.

I had a nice visit with Mr. Perry. He was not so enthusiastic about the Archeveque seedling that appealed to me on my visit in 1922, but the memory of its splendid rich colors still makes me anxious to get a specimen plant acclimated in my garden. Everyone had words of praise for his Iris, Marion Cran, and I hope to see a good speci-

men bloom on the two-year clump now growing in my exhibition section.

I visited Mr. Bunyard, secretary of the newly formed Iris Society, and his extensive preparations for a display at the Chelsea Show to be held in London in May, made me wish to prolong my vacation. I made a special trip to Hampshire to see Sir Arthur Hort. In discussing his productions he said his most beautiful Iris was Leonato, the one which pleased the American visitors in 1922, although he added that Proteus would give the largest bloom.

The president of the new Iris Society, Mr. G. P. Baker, and its treasurer, Mr. G. L. Pilkington, are both enthusiastic amateurs. These men have splendid Iris collections and both are interested in developing new seedlings. No doubt Mr. Baker's long friendship with Mr. Yeld has fostered his seedling hobby as he was proud to tell me of their boyhood experiences together. It is not strange that the Yeld varieties hold the honor locations in his garden. I am looking for some fine creations from these two collections in the future. I tried to see Mr. Dykes, but as Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society he is a very busy man, and the very day I had reserved for a visit with him, he had to leave London for Holland to judge the Bulb Shows. I would have been glad to renew my acquaintance with the originator of Aphrodite, which is conceded to be one of the world's best pink Irises. I hope I may be more fortunate on my next visit, for I not only missed seeing him, but as Mr. Yeld was away on a visit and Mr. Bliss was ill, I missed seeing them also.

The idea which seemed uppermost in the minds of all the English Iris enthusiasts was an earnest desire to welcome the American visitor, and assist him in seeing the best gardens of England. Mr. Pilkington, whose address is Lower Lee, Woolton, Liverpool, is ideally located to welcome the traveler and he asked me to tell American enthusiasts that if they were arriving in Liverpool during the Iris blooming season, he will be glad to show them his garden, and I know he can give them information which will enable them to visit other prominent Iris collections. And they appreciate our visits, too. Several Englishmen told me how glad they were to have Americans visit their gardens, and many told me how much they enjoyed the address given by Mrs. Silas B. Waters of Cincinnati, at the Iris Society's annual meeting in London last year. If you are planning on a European trip, by all means arrange to visit these Iris enthusiasts. I will be glad to assist anyone in preparing a schedule which will take in all the prominent Iris gardens of France and England.

The lure of home and my own garden prompted an early return. My arrival last week was very timely, as my

dwarf section is now in full bloom and a few of my intermediates are showing color. Even two of the earlier Peonies, *Tenui folia* and *Russi major* are in bloom, which indicates a very, very early blooming season as these usually open for me in May.

If the dwarf Irises came at the same time as our splendid tall bearded varieties, one would have less interest in them, but their early blooming date and their usefulness in border edging and rock-garden work, merits for them a place in the Iris world. My first dwarf to bloom was the common *Pumila*, opening April twenty-third and to date over sixty varieties have bloomed. Many of them have merit, which I will treat in a future Garden Note. The outstanding ones so far are:

BLUE STONE

A good sized excellent purple, five inches in height.

CITREA

One of the best lemon yellows, with a splendid orange beard, five inches in height.

GRAMINEA

Red violet with fine carriage, six inches in height. It is developing larger blooms each day. Very profuse bloomer and a splendid variety.

While I know that the name Graminea properly belongs to a beardless species, yet I am carrying this dwarf as Graminea because I purchased it under that name in 1914, and as I consider it the best dwarf in my collection I hesitate to discard the variety simply because the name duplicates a beardless sort. I wish I knew its true name for the variety certainly deserves a place in the Iris world.

MAROCAIN

One of Millet's new varieties. Rich red purple with a violet tone. A splendid variety, more dwarf than Graminea, being only five inches high.

STANDARD

Light purple with excellent sized bloom, five inches in height. A good variety.

ORANGE QUEEN

One of the best yellow dwarfs.

COUNTESS D'HAUTEVILLE

One of Millet's new dwarfs. Smoky heliotrope with just enough red in the tone to make it attractive. Very dwarf, three inches in height.

THE BRIDE

One of the best whites, taller than the average dwarf, seven inches in height.

COMPACTA

Standards of violet-blue with falls of dark blue. Bloom slightly above foliage, seems to nestle in the foliage, flower of good size, and one of the best extremely low growing dwarfs, being only four inches in height.

EXCELSA

Medium sized yellow dwarf Iris. Standards lemon yellow, falls lemon yellow overlaid with olive green, beard deep orange. Height four inches.

VERNA

Distinct rich deep blue flower with a beautiful yellow beard. Very dwarf. Height five inches.

LA PERLE

A beautiful pale yellow Iris very similar to Excelsa. Height five inches.

FORMOSA

Standards violet-blue, falls violet-purple with beautiful conspicuous white beard. Height three inches.

FAIRY

Standards light blue violet, falls deeper violet. Height six inches.

PUMILA ATROVIOLOACEA

Violet-purple with white markings at base of falls. Beard white, tipped blue. Height four inches.

CANARY BIRD

Standards a self colored straw yellow, falls same color as standards with green markings. Orange beard. Height four inches.

LOBELIA

Standards lavender-violet, falls deep velvety violet. Height five inches.

FIEBERI

Deep violet-blue. Large and handsome bloom, very dwarf. Height three inches.

STEWART

A splendid genuine yellow with bronze markings on the falls. Orange beard. Height six inches.

DIAMOND

Standards and falls white with green and bronze markings. A very slight tinge of blue. Height four inches.

Of course as the season progresses, other varieties may be superior to these. I am enjoying the season in my garden and of course am looking forward to the climax when the tall bearded varieties show their color as I am expecting to see specimen bloom on Madame Abel Chatenay, Morning Splendor, Proteus, Madame Durrand, Marion Cran, Chasseur, Fedora, Salanique, Imperator, Peau Rouge, Wedgewood, Madame Cecille Bouscant, Mystic, Conchobar, Maori Princess, Marsh Marigold, Solano, Faith, Harmony, Menetrier, Mlle. Schwartz, Memory, Zulu, Lord Lambourne, Moonlight, Trinidad, Saul, Sea Nymph, Olivia, Sunset and many others. But why fill a Garden Note with anticipated pleasures,—the season's record will give much better data for a future issue.



LAST year my Iris Exhibition Garden covered more space than my Peony Exhibition Garden, but in the autumn I replanted about three-fourths of my Irises. As a result of that fact and the splendid growth of a new Peony planting, the garden will this season have much more attraction for Peony lovers than for Iris enthusiasts.

LEE R. BONNEWITZ

Van Wert, Ohio, May 5, 1925.